

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

Claims 1-21(canceled, without prejudice).

Claim 22 (currently amended): A method of operating voice traffic bearing packet switched network, comprising the steps of:

receiving at a gateway to the packet-switched network, a call originated from a voice terminal outside the packet-switched network, the voice terminal being communicatively ~~communicably~~ connected to the gateway for communication to the gateway of the call, the call comprising a call initiation information and the call initiation information comprising a call destination identifier originated from the voice terminal;

packetizing the call initiation information at the gateway;

directing the packetized call initiation information over the packet-switched network to a centralized authentication service connected to the gateway by the packet-switched network, and thereby establishing a communicative ~~communicable~~ connection between the gateway and the authentication service via the packet-switched network;

upon authentication by the authentication service, dissociating the communicative ~~communicable~~ connection of the packet-switched network between the gateway and the authentication service;

routing the call by the packet-switched network, after the step of dissociating if authentication succeeds;

connecting the call, by re-directing the communicable connection to establish a communicable connection, on the packet-switched network, between the gateway and a target device; and

wherein the steps of routing and connecting the call employ are-re-directing is based, at least in part, on the packetized call initiation information that corresponds to the call initiation information, including the call destination identifier, to effect for the call between from the target device and voice terminal to the gateway.

Claim 23 (currently amended): A method of operating voice traffic bearing packet switched network, the method comprising the steps of:

receiving at a gateway to the packet-switched network, an information stream including encoded voice-band traffic, the information stream comprising a destination identifier for a target device for voice traffic between the gateway and the target device;

directing the information stream over the packet-switched network to an authentication service;

authenticating a credential associated with the information stream using the authentication service;

upon authentication by the authentication service, dissociating the information stream from the authentication service;

~~re-directing routing, via the packet-switched network independent of the authentication service, a next information stream including encoded voice-band traffic via the packet-switched network, to establish a connection over the packet-switched network between the~~ with a target device, the ~~routing re-directing effected being by the packet-switched network~~ based, at least in part, on the destination identifier; and

receiving at the target device the next information stream via the packet-switched network.

Claim 24 (currently amended): A method of operating voice traffic bearing packet switched network, comprising the steps of:

receiving at a gateway to the packet-switched network, an information stream representable by encoded voice-band traffic, the information stream originating from a voice terminal ~~communicatively communicably~~ connected to the gateway and the information stream comprising an identifier of a second voice terminal;

directing an encoded voice-band traffic, corresponding to at least a portion of the information stream, over the packet-switched network to an authentication service;

authenticating the voice terminal via the encoded voice-band traffic;

upon authentication by the authentication service, dissociating the communicative connection ~~over the packet-switched network~~ between the authentication service and the gateway; ;

next directing ~~at least a portion of~~ the encoded voice-band traffic over the packet-switched network to a target device, the packet-switched network, not the authentication service, effects the step of next directing as so dissociated from the communicative connection between the authentication service and the gateway;

further receiving at the gateway a next information stream representable by next encoded voice-band traffic, the next information stream originating from the voice terminal communicatively ~~communicably~~ connected to the gateway;

next directing at least a portion of a next encoded voice-band traffic, corresponding to at least a portion of the next information stream, over the packet-switched network to the target device, as so dissociated from the communicative connection between the authentication service and the gateway;

receiving at least a portion of the next information stream at the second voice terminal communicatively ~~communicably~~ connected to the target device, the second voice terminal for the receipt is dictated based on the identifier.

Claims 25-28 (canceled, without prejudice).

Claim 29 (currently amended): The method of claim 22, wherein the call initiation information comprises a telephone number of the target ~~a destination~~ device.

Claim 30 (currently amended): The method of claim 29, wherein the telephone number is a PSTN call number and the target ~~destination~~ device is a second voice terminal.

Claim 31 (previously presented): The method of claim 22, wherein the target device is a second gateway, communicably connected to a second voice terminal.

Claim 32 (currently amended): The method of claim 31, wherein the call initiation information comprises a telephone number of the second voice terminal and the second voice terminal is communicatively ~~communicably~~ connected outside the packet-switched network to the second gateway.

Claim 33 (previously presented): The method of claim 23, wherein the next information stream includes the destination identifier.

Claim 34 (currently amended): The method of claim 33, further comprising the step of:
~~communicably~~ communicatively connecting a recipient voice terminal to the target device, based on the destination identifier.

Claim 35 (previously presented): The method of claim 34, further comprising the step of:
receiving a voice message at the recipient voice terminal, corresponding to at least a portion of the next information stream.

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Claims 22-24 and 29-35 are pending in this application.

Claims 22-24, 29-30, 32 and 34 are amended.